

**Remarks by Cochairs of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs' Global Agricultural Development Project – Dan Glickman, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and Catherine Bertini, former Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme**

**HEARING - "Alleviating Global Hunger: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Leadership"  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
March 24, 2009**

*Catherine Bertini and Dan Glickman will each have 5 minutes for remarks.*

**Catherine Bertini – Remarks on the Rationale for U.S. Action on Global Hunger Issues**

- **Opening**
  - Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, and members of the committee, thank you for giving Dan and me the opportunity to appear before you today.
  - As you know, Dan and I are cochairs of the Global Agricultural Development Project, which examines the risks posed by rural poverty and hunger, and identifies the opportunities for the United States to play a greater global leadership role on these issues.
- **The project concludes that the Obama Administration and 111<sup>th</sup> Congress have a unique opportunity to restore America's global leadership in the fight against hunger and poverty.**
- **This opportunity ultimately lies in a refocusing of U.S. foreign assistance on agricultural development.**
  - Over 600 million, of the nearly 1 billion people in the world who live on less than \$1-a-day, reside in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
  - These people, the majority of whom are women, are smallholder farmers and their families.

- Rural dwellers in these regions do not have the necessary tools to improve their agricultural livelihoods. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone,
  - 70% of those in rural areas live more than a 30-minute walk away from the closest all-weather road;
  - Only 5% of all arable land is irrigated;
  - And, even in a good year with adequate rainfall, the crops in the fields will produce only 20% of the yield typical in most developed countries.
- Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are also the two regions that are most likely to be affected by climate change and water scarcity. In fact, if the rural sectors in these regions are not developed, and population growth continues as projected, the number of undernourished people in Sub-Saharan Africa alone will triple between 1990 and 2080.
- If we are going to make significant advances in reducing global hunger and poverty, we must focus on developing the agricultural sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- **American foreign assistance, as it is currently structured, does not support agricultural development.**
  - Until the 1980s, U.S. foreign assistance heavily focused on agricultural development, which contributed to the success of the first Green Revolution.
  - However, for a variety of reasons, America's overall assistance to agriculture has declined 85 percent since this time. For example,
    - USAID sponsored scholarships to Africans for overseas postgraduate training in agriculture fell from 250 scholarships in 1985 to only 42 by 2008.
    - In the 1990s, USAID supported the training of 15,000 students who earned higher education degrees in agriculture. Today, there are less than 1,000 students who can pursue degrees with USAID funding.
    - USAID's agricultural staffing has declined from 191 specialists in 1990, to 22 today.

- The U.S. is now spending 20 times as much on food aid to Africa, as it is on helping Africans feed themselves.
- Although this food aid is critical, a better balance between aid and agricultural development assistance is needed.
- **America has a vital interest in alleviating poverty in Africa and South Asia by putting agriculture back at the center of U.S. development policy.**
  - **National Security Benefits**
    - It is proven that hunger and poverty can quickly become political flashpoints
      - We saw in 2008 that countries that were severely affected by the high food prices experienced violent political confrontations, resulting in 200 deaths, and helped unseat governments in Haiti and Mauritania.
    - Poverty alleviation can contribute to economic, and political stability, which would provide a hedge against a future danger of more failed states.
  - **Commercial Benefits**
    - Americans and South Asians, and Africans are becoming far more closely connected every year in areas such as trade, investment, health, and the arts.
    - Faster economic growth in Africa and South Asia will create new trade and investment opportunities for American business. Already in South Asia, where GDP growth averaged above 8 percent between 2005 and 2008, American investors and exporters are making important gains.
    - A renewed American focus on alleviating poverty reduction in rural areas will pay significant economic dividends in the long-run.
  - **Institutional Benefits**
    - Moreover, increased U.S. support for agricultural development provides opportunities and benefits to U.S. institutions such as American NGOs

working in agriculture and development, land-grant universities, and America's private philanthropic foundation.

- **Restore America's Standing and Influence**
  - A renewed U.S. effort to tackle the problems of global hunger and poverty are **an opportunity for the U.S. to re-introduce itself to the world** as a leader and force for positive change.
- **Moral Responsibility**
  - 42 percent of the American people believe it is VERY IMPORTANT to combat global hunger and believe it should be a foreign policy priority.
- **Investments in agricultural development will have a large impact.**
  - The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that if only public investments in agricultural research are doubled, sustained, and targeted towards Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, **270 million people will be able to lift themselves out of poverty by 2020.**
- **Refocusing U.S. foreign assistance on agricultural development presents a unique opportunity to renew America's international reputation as a force for good, and also to lay the foundation to significantly reduce global poverty.**

## Dan Glickman – Remarks on the Opportunities for U.S. Leadership

- **Opening**
  - Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about this topic.
- To echo Catherine's comments, we believe the greatest opportunity for the U.S. to alleviate global hunger and poverty is to put **agricultural development at the center of U.S. foreign assistance policy**.
- The project we cochaired developed **five recommendations for how the United States can best carry out this objective**. All the recommendations are based on a shared set of **principles and priorities**. They assume:
  - The United States must attach a **high priority to reducing large-scale hunger and poverty abroad** and domestically; and it should be done as soon as possible.
  - **Women must be central to any development approach**, since the majority of those working in agriculture are women.
  - The U.S. approach to agricultural development should be **based on reciprocal partnerships** – which will require the sustained leadership of the President of the United States and key members of Congress.
- **The most critically important requirement for a renewed U.S. effort in the fight against global poverty is leadership, and in particular, the interest and commitment of the president, and of Congress.**
- We realize that we are experiencing an unprecedented time of economic distress. However, our research suggests that **the U.S. can make a significant impact on global hunger at a modest cost**. The recommendations our group suggests have a **first year cost of \$340 million**, increasing to \$1.03 billion annually when the proposal reaches full funding after five years.

- I would like to highlight a few of the key recommendations of our group.
  - **The U.S. should increase support for agricultural extension and education in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.**
    - The powerful nexus of public investments in agricultural research, education, and extension was an important factor in reducing the burden of poverty in rural America, and extending the Green Revolution through Asia.
    - In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, education and extension services are not well-funded, and therefore, limited.
    - Because of its strong land-grant university system, the United States is uniquely suited to support the development of strong education and extension services in the developing world. We recommend:
      - USAID increase its support for students from Africa and South Asia pursuing advanced agricultural degrees at U.S. universities;
      - USAID can also fund partnerships between U.S. and universities in developing countries to expand the educational capacity of institutions abroad;
      - The U.S. government can support programs in Africa and South Asia that are similar to 4-H and Future Farmers of America that will give education and training to those in rural areas.
  - **The U.S. should also increase its support for agricultural research in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia**
    - Basic and adaptive agricultural research must be at the foundation of any serious effort to increase agricultural productivity.
    - Studies that calculate annual rates of return on alternative investments for increasing growth and reducing poverty in poor countries find that investments in agricultural research have either the highest or second highest rates of return.

- Therefore, our project recommends the U.S. increase investment in several existing research institutions and programs:
  - the National Agricultural Research Systems in African and South Asian countries;
  - the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, the strongest international agricultural research body;
  - collaborative research between scientists at U.S., African and South Asian universities.
- The recently introduced Global Food Security Bill would be an excellent vehicle through which to implement many of the recommendations our group proposes.
- **In order to better carry out U.S. development assistance and agricultural development policy, our group suggests:**
  - **Improving interagency coordination for America's agricultural development assistance efforts.**
    - Interagency coordination is a particular challenge in the area of foreign assistance, including food aid and nutrition, where literally scores of different agencies can play a role.
    - To coordinate these functions, our group proposes creating an Interagency Council on Global Agriculture within the Executive Office of the President to provide active leadership and maintain consistent priorities and actions among the many U.S. government agencies engaged in this area.
    - A National Security Council deputy should be charged with the responsibility of global agriculture and food security issues, and this deputy, along with the administrator of USAID, should chair the Interagency Council.



- **Congress capacity to partner in managing agricultural assistance policy should also be strengthened.**
  - There is as broad support base in Congress for U.S. government actions that will reduce poverty and hunger abroad. However, in recent years, there has not been a clear focal point for mobilizing and expressing support.
  - There is also not a clear way to link the concerns of congressional committees to agricultural staff in USAID.
  - To remedy this problem, we suggest that relevant committees establish clear staff liaison responsibilities in the area of agriculture and rural development.
- **The U.S. government cannot solve the problems of global poverty on its own, but its action can serve as a catalyst for public-private partnerships that will engage the relevant stakeholders, and ensure that action is effective.**
  - The recommendations put forth in our report, draw on the resources and expertise of nongovernmental institutions such as universities, private companies, NGOs working in the area of development assistance, and private philanthropies.
  - More importantly, we suggest the U.S. build, and rely on partnerships with governments in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, other donor governments, regional organizations, international financial and research institutions, and international NGOs.
  - **Such recommendations are fully participatory and tightly networked for the agricultural development actors at the government, international organization, civil society, and private sector levels.**



- **Summary and Closing:**
  - This is an opportunity to **reintroduce America as a leader in the world and force for positive change.**
  - The recommendations discussed will have a **significant and lasting impact** on our international partners.